Wednesday, December 31, 2008 • 4 Sections / Vol. 24 / No. 23 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



LANDMARK TURNS 100 Mansion House in Baguio City, the official summer retreat of Philippine presidents, turns a hundred years old on Tuesday. President Arroyo, who's welcoming the New Year with her family in the summer capital, unveils two new markers at the mansion's imposing gates, to mark the event. Built from 1907 to 1908, the Mansion House was completed a year before Baguio was chartered. It was the official summer residence of the American governors general. It was designed by William Parsons who was an aide to Daniel Burnham, the American architect who designed and built Baguio for American officials as their refuge from the heat of Manila. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Long holiday break stalls bribery case

By Jeannette I. Andrade

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY, BUT not for the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) whose investigation of the alleged attempts to free the three so-called "Alabang Boys" has been hampered by the long holiday break.

NBI Director Nestor Mantaring said the probe of allegations that P50 million was paid to Department of Justice (DOJ) officials for the dismissal of drug charges against Richard Santos

LONG A6

Mansion House is 100 years old

By Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUMMER RESIDENCE of Philippine Presidents turned a century old this year but many Baguio residents probably did not know it until yesterday when President Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled twin markers to commemorate this milestone.

Mansion House, where the country's head of state stays whenever he or she is in the Cordillera region, was completed a year before Baguio, the summer capi-

MANSION A9

Israel rejects truce calls

World appeals for ceasefire as Israeli infantry set to move on Hamas

GAZA CITY—ISRAEL REJECTED WORLD APPEALS for a truce yesterday and warned that its deadly assault on Gaza could last for weeks as warplanes pummeled Hamas positions for a fourth day and tanks massed on the border.

Despite the devastating aerial pounding that has now killed at least 360 people, Hamas militants continued to fight back, firing deadly rockets deep inside Israeli territory.

Children again fell victim to Israel's "all-out war" on the Islamist Hamas movement, with two sisters dying when a missile slammed into their donkey cart in the northern town of Beit Hanun.

In Gaza City, residents picked through rubble and broken glass after a night in which Israel hammered the overcrowded territory with some 40 strikes targeting Hamas buildings, training camps and rocket launchers.

Despite repeated pleas by UN chief Ban Ki-moon for a stop to the "unacceptable" violence that has sparked outrage in the Muslim world and protests in many countries, Israel waved aside calls for a truce.

"There is no reason that we would accept a ceasefire at this stage," Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said.

"If there is a ceasefire, that will allow Hamas to regain strength, recover from the shock and prepare an even stronger attack against Israel," he said.

Mushir al-Masri, a Hamas official, countered: "We are not begging for calm and there is no room to talk about calm amid the continued aggression and siege."

With tanks and personnel massed on the Gaza border, Israel said that its infantry was ready to join what it warned would be a prolonged offensive.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the bombardment so far was "the first of several stages approved by the security Cabinet," while Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai warned

ISRAEL A8

'White alert' raised for New Year's Eve

By Dona Pazzibugan and Tarra Quismundo



DON'T BLOW IT Welcome the New Year with a drum roll, not with a bang hazardous to health.

ALL HOSPITALS UNDER THE Department of Health will be on "Code White Alert" today and on New Year's Day to handle an expected rise in emergency medical cases from the New Year revelry.

If you are scrambling to contact the Philippine National Police for help, dial 117 or text: PNP <space> message—then send to 2920.

Even the Philippine National

WHITE ALERT A6

Dela Paz rejects DAR chief public apology

By DJ Yap, Jeannette I. Andrade and Alcuin Papa

THE FAMILY OF BUSINESSMAN Delfin Dela Paz yesterday refused to accept a public apology made by Agrarian Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) vowed to get at the truth behind the golf course brawl between the two families.

As the official probe into the incident got under way, others stepped into the fray.

In a phone interview, activist priest Fr. Robert Reyes called for the resignation of Pangandaman and said he would join a march of farmers in Laguna today to express his support for the Dela Paz family.

The farmers are pressing Pangandaman's Department of Agrarian Reform to void what they say is an order exempting a big portion of a Laguna hacienda from the agrarian reform law.

Besides the NBI, the management of the Valley Golf and Country Club, where the melee

DELA PAZ A8

Red Rose drops gun for normal life



FROM REVULSION TO HEALING Former NPA rebel Rose Gumarog (right) with younger sister Fatima is picking up the pieces of her life, reading and writing to prepare for schooling.

By Jocelyn R. Uy

HER RESOLVE TO LEAD A new life and fix shattered family ties started with a broken bone.

Rose Ann Gumarog, 22, joined the New People's Army before finishing high school to avenge her father, Eddie, a peasant leader killed allegedly by government troops in 2003.

But her revulsion of the military slowly turned into something less spiteful after she was gravely wounded in a clash with the 16th Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in General Nakar, Quezon.

RED ROSE A9

Pet lovers declare war on 'explosive' revelry

By Tessa R. Salazar

ANIMAL RIGHTS AND WELFARE groups are preparing for a "war" on New Year's Eve.

As millions of Filipinos explode firecrackers to ward off evil spirits, millions of their "best friends" will be cowering in fear. Animal lovers, aware of what the noisy celebrations can do to their hearing-sensitive pets, are making their own preparations for a "violent" greeting to 2009.

Tintin Ang, a "parent" to 13 dogs, three cats and two birds, has her "battle plan" all mapped out. She will gather all her animals into her "bomb shelter"—the master bedroom of the family home in Las Piñas—and play soft music on

PET LOVERS A6

Purpose-driven ex-NPA back in grass-roots work

By Fe Zamora

TWENTY YEARS AFTER he burned his role in the infamous purge of suspected government spies in the rebel communist ranks, Romeo P. Constantino is active in grass-roots organization again.

But with a difference.

"I've realized that I could serve the community, not out of hatred for the government or the military, but out of love for the people," said Constantino, 53, a former communist cadre who turned Born Again Christian while detained in

PURPOSE-DRIVEN A9



FAITH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE Born-Again Christian Roy Constantino is into grass-roots organizing just like when he was a communist. But it's different this time.



Jobs top concern of people who seek fortune tellers' help

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SO WHAT DOES THE NEW Year hold?

Some Filipinos want to know and have been trooping to the Quiapo Church in Manila not only to pray but also to seek help from fortune tellers camped outside.

"They have many questions about their relationships, jobs and the possibility of going abroad next year," fortune teller Ella Perez, 65, told the Inquirer.

JOBS A6

Second FRONT PAGE

Contingency plan set for Pinoys in Gaza

THE GOVERNMENT HAS READIED A CONTINGENCY plan for Filipinos living in war-torn Gaza and its surrounding areas as Israel and Hamas forces continue to trade offensives in a conflict that has killed over 364 civilians and soldiers in the past five days.

Be agents of hope in 2009—CBCP

By Dona Pazzibugan

Father, 2 sons killed in strafing incident

[illegible]

Abduction

[illegible]

Atrocities

[illegible]

40 years in prison for 'shabu' possession

[illegible]







When people die without having access to medicines, will you just watch?

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Apply now as a PITC Pharma, Inc. (PPI) Territorial Distributor, Botika Ng Bayan or Botika ng Bayan Express outlet. Earn good returns on your investment, help provide better healthcare to all.



Alagaan ang Kalusugan

LABANAN ANG KAHIRAPAN



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BOTIKA NG BAYAN

If you own a drugstore or planning to open one, with capitalization of at least P300,000.00, willing to put up a surety bond, with good store location, you can be a full or accredited Botika Ng Bayan outlet and earn high profit margins!

BOTIKA NG BAYAN EXPRESS

If you own a sari-sari, grocery, convenience or other types of store, apply as a Botika ng Bayan Express to sell over the counter medicines and see your business expand in no time!

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3. Guaranteed BFAD-approved quality medicines.
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5. Supplies medicines to DOH and to over 11,000 Botika ng Barangay nationwide.
6. At least 2,000 Botika ng Bayan Express outlets to be opened all over the country.
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PITC PHARMA

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Clears Allergies Fast

without drowsiness

Claritin is proven to make you alert and focused, not drowsy.

FORMULA 15-24-0

Acts as fast as **15** minutes.
Lasts for as long as **24** hours.
With virtually **0** drowsiness.

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- ✔ Itchy, Watery Eyes
- ✔ Runny Nose
- ✔ Sneezing

From the Leader in Allergy Research

Schering-Plough

Use as directed. If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

GMA orders new probe of La Union shabu lab case

Charges dismissed

Dismayed

Transparency

Rivals

Holidays stall bribe case

No access to documents

'White alert' raised for New Year's Eve

Campaign against firecrackers

'Call 117'

Policemen warned

Firecracker zones

Uplift campaign

Pet lovers declare war on 'explosive' revelry

'Cruelest time of year'

Pet's 'third eye'

How to keep pets safe

Most violent places

Vegetarians' call

Humane procedures

Meat alternatives

Hold that bite of ham



MYSTERIOUS WHALE
A dead Minke whale measuring about 10-meters long was found floating on Manila Bay near South Harbor's Pier 13. Coast Guard officials don't know how or why it ended up on the bay.

Dead whale found on Manila Bay

By Jeannette I. Andrade

Odd find

'Labor attaché must go'

By Jerome Aning

'No interpreter'

Request for aid

Israel rejects truce calls





Living in horror

Hamas warning

Washington's strong support

EU to meet in Paris

Dela Paz rejects DAR chief public apology



SCENE OF THE CRIME

Pangandaman says won't quit

Golf courses

Witnesses' testimony vital

Priest wants 'justice'

Will pursue charges

Valley Golf vows firm, fair action

By Cedelf P. Tupas

Serve as example

'Please bear with us'

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Jobs top concern of people who seek . . .

Jobs, finances, new house

Invest in agriculture

Season of deceit

Mansion House is 100 years old



CIRCA 1910: A rare photograph of the original Mansion House which is part of the archival collections of Baguio historian Erlyn Ruth Alcantara. The photo reveals woodlands, a maze and a grazing field for horses which is today a private golf course.

Facade, entrances original

Not original name

Historical context

To build museum

Prisoners from Manila

Red Rose drops gun for normal life

Cycle of revenge

Own volition

Side of story

Airlifted

Mother joined rallies

No to armed struggle

Fleeing Karapatan

Memories of endless travels

Tears for murdered father

Like normal life

Equivalency tests

Purpose-driven ex-NPA back in grass-roots work



SWEAT EQUITY: Bayanihan-style construction is at the core of the Amore Purpose-Driven Community which is patterned after American pastor Rick Warren's PEACE plan to heal spiritual emptiness and eradicate poverty, disease, illiteracy and corruption.

Amore concept

Surrendering to Jesus

Baffling decision

AIM scholarship

What's next?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION





Gruesome but true

EDITORIAL

Greeting for the New Year: Power rates to increase

AS I SEE IT



Neal H. Cruz

The year that was

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

Abuse of power

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



Talismans of hope

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



Rizal Day ceremonies

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



2008

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



Global village

Philippines

OFWs to hold rallies versus Charter change worldwide

LETTERS





Focus should be on governance, too

Filipinos' failure to act against injustice will lead to more deaths

Edsa II was spontaneous reaction to abuses committed by Estrada

History will judge Cory for apology

INQUIRER Northern Luzon



OUTLOOK IN 2009

Difficult year, but Filipinos will survive

THE IMPACT OF THE UNITED STATES recession and the crash of major financial markets around the world will be felt by the country by 2009, business and political leaders in Northern and Central Luzon agree.



'Tourism touches all economic sectors, even small vendors'

Harder times

Optimistic but cautious

More spiritual

Small businesses

Over production

Shrinking peso

From bad to good

"A serious crisis"

Tourism potentials

Back to basics

Across the NATION

Rains in Quezon bad omen for firecracker vendors

LUCENA CITY—IF THERE'S anything that fireworks vendors fear most, it is not a government crackdown on firecrackers or a campaign to discourage the use of fireworks.

Vendors fear rain more.

[illegible]

Girl, 4, abducted, released as Basilan kidnappings rise

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Barely a week after the release of a 17-year-old nursing student by Abu Sayyaf gunmen in Basilan, another victim—a 4-year-old girl from Lamitan City—was abducted, but later freed.

[illegible]



PLAYING WITH FIRE

[illegible]

Still in captivity

[illegible]

Rising number of cases

[illegible]

German feels at home in rites for Rizal

[illegible]



[illegible]

NEWSBRIEFS

Abra exec slain

[illegible]

NPAs attack cops

[illegible]

Boy, 15, executed

[illegible]

Cops on high alert

[illegible]

Firecrackers seized

[illegible]

YEARENDER

They shone in shadow of Pacquiao

By Cedelf P. Tupas

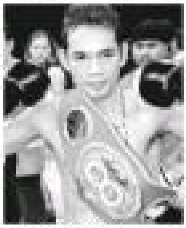
FOR SHEER MAGNITUDE, IMPACT AND CASH INVOLVED, Manny Pacquiao's exploits were unmatched in 2008.



PERFECT PARTNERSHIP Dorothy Delasin (left) and Jennifer Rosales hoist the Women's World Cup trophy after winning the stroke title in South Africa.



REDEMPTION Harry Tañamor



KING Nonito Donaire Jr.

GOLF

BILLIARDS

CHESS

BOXING

WUSHU

New year, new wishes

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

SPORTSWATCH

Pasay 3-cock derby Friday

'Bentahan' 4-cocker Jan. 3

Pistons break Magic streak; Suns sizzle



SHAQUILLE O'Neal scores on a dunk ...

London Olympics hopefuls start training soon

AFTER THE HOLIDAYS, AN ELITE CLUSTER OF athletes will be pitted to start a four-year long training for the 2012 London Olympics.

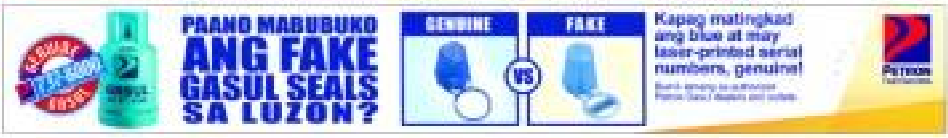
SPORTS





Tagaytay-RP downs Indian squad, stays in the hunt





Aplus METRO

Cops foil robbery gang led by ex-Army man

Alleged leader killed, 1 nabbed after chase

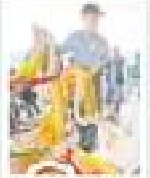
THINKING THEY HEARD FIRECRACKERS, RESIdents of an alley-web village in Quezon City initially shrugged off what rang out in their neighborhood yesterday morning.



Magallanes flyover snarls traffic after it was closed temporarily due to cracks



Accident



7 hurt in LPG tank explosion

Mother-and-child relationship theme of exhibit by UP artists

By Julie M. Aurelio







METROBRIEFS

Robbed by dishwasher

Electrician fished out

300 street sweepers

Ex-Abra solon killed after being hit by speeding van

By DJ Yap

Mom, daughter stabbed dead

DID YOU KNOW

17 suspects stand trial in China milk scandal



India, source of many priests, may need them in homeland

Scenic Pakistan valley falls to Taliban

Sydney in furor over plan to ban topless sunbathing



Taiwan ex-president is back behind bars



CHEN

NZ jetliner partly runs on veggie oil

The WORLD





Thai PM ducks protesters to give first policy speech

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S NEW PRIME MINISTER Abhisit Vejjajiva gave his inaugural policy speech on Tuesday, but only after protesters blockaded parliament for a second day and forced him to switch the venue.

AFP

Hasina, Bangladesh's survivor, back at the top



SHEIKH Hasina Wajed

AFP

US Treasury throws $6-B lifeline to GM arm

AFP

Pungent quotes from 2008

Presidential honor husband

Over my dead body

No bones for Kadhafi

Bite



PALIN: Lipstick the only difference

Shock

Surprise

'Yes, we can'

'Tanned' Obama

Farewell kiss

Yes, I am

Lebanon caves vie for 7 Wonders status



AFP

IN THIS ISSUE

BUSINESS

CURRENCIES

Peso expected to weaken further in 2009

RP firms eyed for new global BPO trend

Global downturn seen to take its toll on RP trade

THE PESO, WHICH HAS TUMBLED BY 13 PERCENT against the dollar this year, is widely expected to decline further in 2009 due to the impact a worsening global economic downturn will have on foreign investments, exports and overseas remittances.



TETANGCO

PDIC taps external auditors to speed up settlement

ATM woes

Biz Buzz
By the staff

Ping on the move

Best finance secretary

Alliance Global to spend ₱1.5B to buy back shares

Tan firm sees opportunities in stock market

Netopia to spend ₱30M for upgrades

Gov't investment fairs go to the malls

RP firms eyed for new ...

Peso expected ...

Philippine Stock Exchange

Currencies

RP schools woo Chinese students

DA program to jack up corn output

Sector to start exploring export markets in '09

By Amy R. Remo

Karapatan

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General



Electric cooperatives get ₱1.2B in loans

By Abigail L. Ho



THE GREENING OF NLEX

Implementation of key infra projects pushed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MOTORING
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

'Optimistic' road users reveal what made their day in 2008

By Tessa R. Salazar

ENOUGH OF THE griping, the raging and the bullying. We've had our share of gloom and doom. For the yearender, we tried to find "hopelessly optimistic fools" plying this beloved country's roads, and voila! We found points of light at the end of the long, wide tunnel, so to speak. We asked them: What keeps your faith burning bright? What was the best thing that happened to you on the road in 2008?



Another sensible thing



ISUZU greets 2009 with a new Alterra.

2009 Alterra

By Charles E. Buban

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A diesel-powered ride this coming year, perhaps you might want to consider the updated Alterra that Isuzu Philippines Corp. recently introduced to the market.

New wheel design

Slight price increases



IPC executives flank the 2009 Alterra during its recent formal launch at the Esplanade in Pasay City.

So this is the New Year

MY DRIFT



Drop in consumer demand

Holiday traffic

The costs of owning a car

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza



Fuel costs

Depreciation

Maintenance

Least expensive to own

LIFESTYLE
Home & Entertaining

Which of 2008's top six trends works for you?

Interior designers and homeowners took juxtaposition of elements to the extreme

By Alex Y. Vergara

EVEN AS THE WORLD CONTINUES to become one global village, the home design scene in 2008 spawned a dozen or so trends that cut across culture and geographic boundaries. The lines

WHICH C3



Healthy eats for a healthy year

DEADLY HOLIDAY DIETS

Be wary of the 'firecrackers' within

You think firecrackers and other pyrotechnics do the most damage to humans during New Year's revelries? Well, think again. Before you ingest another mouthful of that lechon, or down your umpteenth bottle of liquor, read this reprinted article by health reporter Tessa R. Salazar, which originally came out in the Christmas 2007 issue of the front page of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.



THIS 2009, load up on 'malunggay', the most nutritious plant in the world.

How to survive the killer cholesterol? Some experts think getting rid of animal protein will do it, and even go so far as to urge Filipinos to look beyond the holiday season and forego animal meat altogether.

Growth of tumors

Do as he says

'Meat-sweet' diet

Still inconclusive



Have yourself a healthy new year with Walter's Holiday Delights



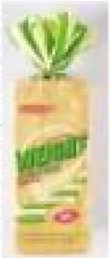
Be wary of the 'firecrackers' . . .

'Malunggay'

Major risk factors

Below WHO standards

Have yourself a healthy new year with Walter's Holiday Delights





All-natural tea for health at Tsoko.Nut Batirol

Which of 2008's top six trends works for you?









Contemporary chic

Minimalism

Cross-cultural/Global inspiration

Weathered look and other curios

Modern luxe

Cocooning

Ben Chan's new foxy baby





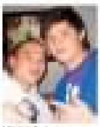


WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

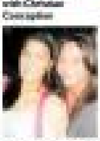
Maurice Arcache











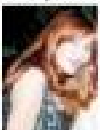
Neil Paras' debut

Johnnie Walker anniversary bottle



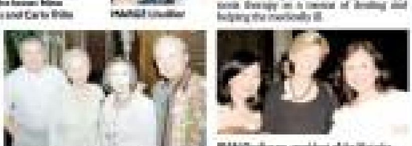


Lecture on psychiatry









ENTERTAINMENT

Most Gender-Sensitive Film: 'Baler'



JERICHO Rosales and Anne Curtis

GENDER ROLES have a significant impact on how men and women relate to one another.

Necessary push

A true man



SCENE from "Dayo"

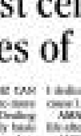


IZA Calzado



AGA Muhlach

28 best celebrity quotes of 2008



DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

SERVICE WITH A HEART











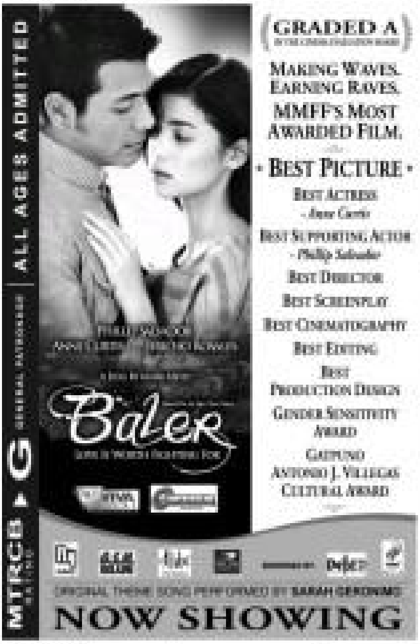
Most Gender-Sensitive . . .

From page D1



28 best . . .

From page D1



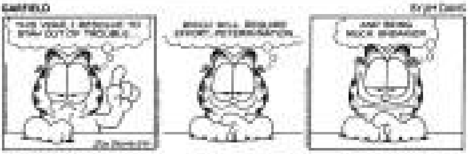








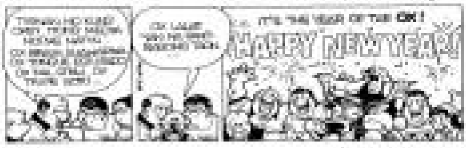
GARFIELD



A. LIPIN



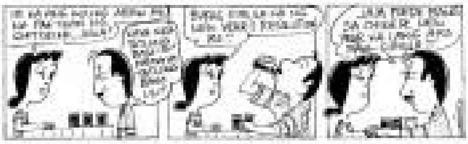
PUGAD BABOY



DICK TRACY



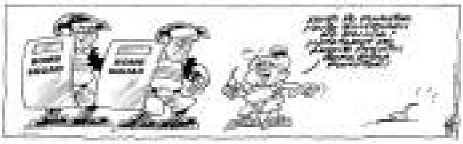
LOVESHOTS



JAMES BOND



DIVINE COMEDY



BABY BLUES

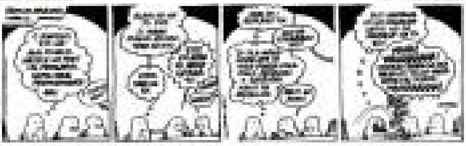




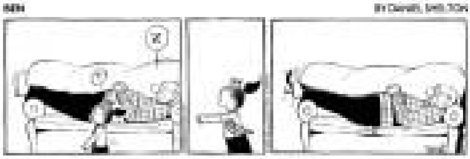
TULDOK



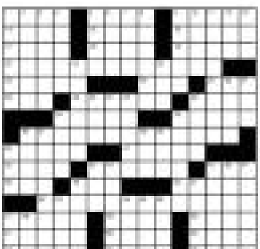
KIKO MACHINE



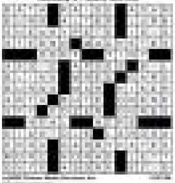
BEN



DAILY CROSSWORD



Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

				1				
	9		7		2			
	6	1				2		
	3						8	
6								1
8	4					6	9	5
	8		1	9			3	
	2		8	3			5	
	1	3	2	4	6	9	7	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Answer to previous puzzle

Fireworks show tonight at Mall of Asia

SHOW TIME

GREAT VALUE TREATS

Keep your Glorietta 1 cinema tickets for great value treats!



THE cast of "Tanging Ina Ninyong Lahat"

Comedy still rules metro film festival

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

COMEDY FILMS HAD A GOOD head start at the box-office in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF).

Star Cinema's Ai Ai de las Alas comedy "Ang Tanging Ina Ninyong Lahat" topped the first two days with total box-office receipts of P41 million.

OctoArts/M-Zet/APT's "Iskul Bukol: 20 Years After," the reunion movie of Tito, Vic and Joey, was in second slot with P 20.6 million. Placing third was Regal Films' horror trilogy "Shake, Rattle & Roll X," with P22.9 million.

Viva Films' historical drama "Baler" ranked fourth with P15.2 million.

Regal's other entry, the adult comedy "Desperadas 2," made P12.5 million, while OctoArts Films' sex comedy "One Night Stand" earned P2.7 million. In the last two spots are Cutting Edge Productions' animated feature "Dayo" (with P2.2 million) and Millennium Films' drama flick "Magkaibigan" (P1 million).

According to Ric Camaligan, MMFF executive committee member, "the first two days posted a nationwide total gross sales of P133.7 million, which is 37 percent higher than last year's record (P97.8 million)."

Favorably graded

Although commercial flicks still rule at the box office, industry leaders noted that all of the entries to this year's film fest were graded favorably by the Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB).

"This is an unprecedented achievement and underscores the substantial growth of the local film industry," said Rolando S. Atienza, chair of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) which runs the CEB.

The three films that earned A grades were "Dayo," "Baler" and "Magkaibigan."

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando said, "These movies are not only 'commercial'; they are also entertaining and of good quality."

The MMDA spearheads the annual film fest.

Stars' scions also rise

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



CELEBRITIES' CHILDREN OFTEN END up in show business, but only a few of them attain star status. The latest kid to make the transition from "reflected glory" to his own spot in the spotlight's glare is Jaden Smith.

After a good introducing role in his dad Will Smith's 2006 starrer "The Pursuit of Happyness," Jaden is now slated to play the title role in a remake of "The Karate Kid."

Many more stars' children who have also turned performers in their own right can be found in Philippine show biz, where entire clans of actors proliferate.

Family affair

For instance, Janno Gibbs is the son of Ronaldo Valdez and the grandson of Gerry de Leon. And Eddie Gutierrez and Annabelle Rama have produced, not just one star, but at least two—siblings Ruffa and Richard, with their other brothers starting to make ripples.

Marc Christopher de Leon had stars for parents, and his and Nora Aunor's natural and/or adoptive children have also "gone show biz." Then, there's Vilma Santos and Edu Manzano and their son, Luis Manzano.

Plus: The Barrettos, the Padillas, Dolphy's peripatetic progeny, Eddie Mesa and Rosemarie Gil's stellar children and grandchildren.

In the Philippines, show biz is clearly a family affair!

From film to TV

After "Sex and the City" and "Get Smart," what are the other hit TV shows that are headed for the movie screen?

If we had our druthers, we would like to see new movies made of "MASH," "East Side, West Side," "The Golden Girls," "Hill Street Blues," "Moonlighting," "The Odd Couple," "St. Elsewhere," "The Twilight Zone," "The Streets of San Francisco" and "Upstairs, Downstairs."

Younger viewers may not recognize these titles, but that's the point. New movies made of them would surprise younger viewers with their proven entertainment value and substance, and would strike them as fresh instead of rehashed or dated.

"MASH," in particular, was a major eye-opener. It started as a movie, and its acerbic spoof of the Vietnam War became such a hit that it was spun off into a TV series, which was similarly loved by viewers.

But that was in the '70s, and today's viewers need a new "MASH" movie to experience what their parents delighted in and thoughtfully mulled over decades ago.

"The Golden Girls" is another TV series that deserves a new film version. Its original senior actresses may no longer be active performers, but a well-cast new lineup of senior stars could still score with moviegoers today.

> On TV, the trend is to go from big to small—meaning, old hit movies are turned into 'teleseryes'

Ditto for "The Twilight Zone," an even earlier sensation on TV which pioneered in telling mystifying stories that showed that things are almost never what they seem.

But, what about the other way around?

That's the contrary way it's going on local TV screens, where the trend is to go from big to small—meaning, old movies are being turned into teleseryes.

Easier to sell

They've been all over the daytime and prime-time schedule: "Dyesebel," "Ligaw na Bulaklak," "Pieta," "Magdusa Ka," "Gaano Kadalas ang Minsan," "Babangon Ako't Dudurugin Kita," etc.

How and why has this contrary trend come to pass? Well, it makes selling the TV versions easier, since the original movie titles assure at least a measure of instant recall—never mind if some of the TV plots are altered so much that they bear little similarity to the film stories they purport to recall.

It's also unfortunate that, in jazzing up the original elements, the TV versions are often too melodramatic or gimmicky to be taken seriously—even if their actors include some of the best thespians in the land.

Compromised

In local TV's overly gimmicky universe, genuine talent is compromised by excessive emotionalizing, fantastic characters, ridiculous high-strung situations and implausible resolutions. But, in this contrived universe, everything is deemed A-OK—as long as it sells and jacks up the ratings.

When will melodrama on the small screen regain a semblance of normalcy? When viewers shall have gotten tired of all that far-out fantasy and fakery, and insist that logic and realism hold sway once more.

We have the power, so let's use it collectively and decisively to effect the reforms that the boob tube sorely needs.

'08 TOP SNAPS





2 MOODS OF MARIAN

We saw many moods of Marian Rivera, GMA 7's hottest property, this year—two are captured in these snaps that landed on our list of 2008's best. Left photo, taken during her birthday concert in August, shows the form with which she embarked on her road to stardom. Above, a quiet moment during the shoot for the fresh wedding scene of the landmark series "Marimar" in March.

WISH LIST



Oyo Sotto

"I wish manalo ang pinoy. I also wish people would continue to support locally produced movies."

—Marichel Cruz

Dexter Doria

"I wish for piracy to be curbed so the movie industry can get back on its feet. I also wish for the active participation of the government in this aspect."

—Marichel Cruz